



**Legislative Department  
Seattle City Council  
Memorandum**

**Date:** July 10, 2014

**To:** Mike O'Brien, Chair  
Tim Burgess, Vice Chair  
Nick Licata, Member  
Planning, Land Use and Sustainability Committee (PLUS)

**From:** Eric McConaghy and Lish Whitson, Council Central Staff

**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan – Docket Recommendations

**Introduction**

With a few limited exceptions, the City Council may amend the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) once a year. The City Council's review process will culminate next year with Council review of Seattle 2035, the major update of the Comprehensive Plan, and any amendments docketed as part of this annual amendment cycle. [Resolution 31402](#) sets out the criteria for including proposed amendments in an annual review cycle. [Resolution 31117](#) provides the framework for the annual process for reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.

Generally, the process occurs in two steps. First, in the summer the Council reviews amendment applications and establishes by resolution a docket of the amendments the Council will consider. This is often referred to as the "docket setting" resolution. Second, in the spring of the following year, after Department of Planning and Development (DPD) review and environmental analysis, Council considers the merits of proposed amendments and acts on a bill amending the Comprehensive Plan. In 2015, because of the breadth of the changes being considered as part of Seattle 2035, the Council should expect to receive DPD's recommendations in the winter and to adopt a bill in the following summer.

This memorandum: 1) sets out the criteria Council uses to determine whether the eleven proposed amendments should be included in the docket setting resolution and 2) discusses proposed amendments and the recommendations of DPD, the Planning Commission, and Central Staff.

**Selection Criteria for Annual Comprehensive Plan**

The Council applies a variety of criteria in deciding whether to include a proposed amendment in the docket setting resolution. A decision to include a proposed amendment in the resolution does not constitute Council approval of a proposed amendment. Rather, a decision to include a proposed amendment means that the Council has determined that the subject matter is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan and consideration of the proposed amendment can be practically accomplished during the amendment cycle. Criteria applied by the Council are as follows:

- I. The amendment is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan because:
  - A. It is consistent with the role of the Comprehensive Plan under the State Growth Management Act;
  - B. It is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the multi-county policies contained in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 strategy;
  - C. Its intent cannot be accomplished by a change in regulations alone;
  - D. It is not better addressed as a budgetary or programmatic decision; and
  - E. It is not better addressed through another process, such as neighborhood planning.
- II. The amendment is legal under state and local law.
- III. It is practical to consider the amendment because:
  - A. The timing of the amendment is appropriate and Council will have sufficient information to make an informed decision;
  - B. City staff will be able to develop within the time available the text for the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, amendments to the Municipal Code, and to conduct sufficient analysis and public review;
  - C. The amendment is consistent with the overall vision of the Comprehensive Plan and well-established Comprehensive Plan policy, or the Mayor or Council wishes to consider changing the vision or established policy; and
  - D. The amendment has not been recently rejected by the City Council.
- IV. If the amendment would change a neighborhood plan, it either is the result of a neighborhood review process or can be reviewed by such a process prior to final Council consideration of the amendment.
- V. The amendment is likely to make a material difference in a future City regulatory or funding decision.

### **Docket-Setting Schedule**

Eleven amendments were sent to the Council between April 1 and May 15. Those amendments can be found in Clerk File 313852. The Planning Commission and the Executive sent their comments and recommendations on the proposed amendments to the Council, on June 27 and July 1, respectively. These are attached to this memorandum. On July 15, PLUS will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments, and will receive a briefing from the Planning Commission, DPD staff and Central Staff. PLUS will discuss and likely vote on a docket resolution on August 13.

### **Staff Recommendations**

The table on the following pages summarizes the proposed amendments and the recommendations of the Planning Commission, DPD, and Central Staff. For two of the amendments, there are unanimous recommendations to include the proposal in the docket. For two of the amendments, there is a consensus to consider the amendments, either as stand-alone amendments or in the context of broader changes to the Comprehensive Plan currently underway as part of Seattle 2035. For one of the amendments, there is a consensus to consider the amendments in the context of other planning studies currently underway. For six of the amendments there are unanimous recommendations against docketing the proposals.

### *Recommended to move forward*

Amendments 1 and 5 are recommended to be included in the docket for consideration in 2015. Both amendments are small changes to the Future Land Use Map that have community support and do not have another venue for review. Both changes can be reviewed in the time available.

### *Recommended to be considered as part of Seattle 2035*

DPD is currently working on Seattle 2035, a major review and update of the Comprehensive Plan that is intended to result in a shorter, more concise Comprehensive Plan. Amendments 2 and 6 are recommended to be considered as part of Seattle 2035. These amendments would change policies in the Urban Village and Land Use elements that are under review for amendment. As part of DPD's work on Seattle 2035, they should consider whether the proposed changes included in Amendments 2 and 6 are appropriate.

Amendment 2 includes a number of changes related to the monitoring of growth in urban villages. The Urban Village element includes a process for monitoring growth in urban villages, and the Council has also adopted Resolution 30728 setting out a criteria to identify growth conditions in urban villages that trigger a neighborhood review. Many of the amendments proposed as part of Amendment 2, particularly amendments setting particular dates or times of year for specific actions to occur, would be better suited to a Resolution than the Comprehensive Plan. However, aspects of Amendment 2 directing the City to consider neighborhood growth during review of the Capital Improvement Program could be considered as the City reviews the Comprehensive Plan as part of Seattle 2035.

Amendment 6 proposes to amend a land use policy to allow more flexibility for the height of institutions and public facilities in residential areas. The proposal would delete detailed language currently in the Comprehensive Plan related to specific uses. Language this detailed would generally not be considered appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan, and thus removing this detailed language is appropriate to consider.

### *Recommended to be considered as part of other efforts currently underway*

DPD is currently reviewing the University Community Urban Center neighborhood plan and zoning in the University District as part of their work on the University District Urban Design Framework. DPD recently issued a draft EIS and expects to forward amendments to the plan and the Future Land Use Map next year along with Seattle 2035. Amendment 3 is best addressed as part of that broader analysis of the University District.

DPD may also forward proposed amendments related to their work in the Ballard, Uptown and Lake City Communities as part of the 2014-2015 Comprehensive Plan amendment cycle.

### **Amendments not recommended to move forward**

There are a number of proposed amendments that do not meet the City's criteria for docketing an issue for review as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Three proposed amendments have recently been rejected by the City Council (criterion III.D): Amendment 4 regarding skybridges, Amendment 9 regarding Pier One, and Amendment 10 regarding the proposed open and participatory government element.

In 2012, City Council did not docket a skybridge amendment that was substantively the same as the current skybridge proposal. In 2011, City Council docketed the Pier One amendment for consideration

and did not include the proposal in the Comprehensive Plan legislation, [Ordinance 117426](#), in 2012. City Council has rejected an open and participatory government amendment, similar to the current proposal, every year since 2008, except for last year. The amendment was not proposed last year. This year, consistent with the recommendations of previous years, Central Staff recommends not including the proposal because the proposed amendment, which articulates policies for the Executive Branch, City Council, City Attorney, Municipal Court and advisory boards, is not consistent with the role of the Comprehensive Plan as a generalized land use plan under the State Growth Management Act.

Three of the amendments are too detailed for the Comprehensive Plan (criteria I.C and I.D): Amendments 4, 7 and 11. If the Council would like to pursue them, they are better addressed through changes to the land use code or other City policies.

Amendment 4 related to the appropriate location of skybridges would best be addressed through changes to the skybridge policies or individual neighborhood plans. Amendments 7 and 11, related to the appropriate location of live-work units and congregate housing respectively, are best addressed through amendments to the land use code. DPD is currently working on a study to map pedestrian districts citywide. That work is expected to come to the Council this year or early in 2015. It will likely address some of the concerns regarding live-work units voiced by the proposed amendments. The Council is currently reviewing regulations related to congregate housing.

It is not practical to consider Amendment 8, related to the Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing Industrial Center (BINMIC), during the current annual cycle (criteria III.A and III.B). The proposal would result in a significant change to a large part of the BINMIC. Removing a large area from the Manufacturing/Industrial Center and changing a manufacturing/industrial designation to commercial/mixed-use will require significant community outreach and environmental review, including analysis of impacts on existing jobs and businesses and a clear proposal for future use of the area. While the Ballard Urban Design Framework is currently underway, it is not currently considering any changes to industrial areas, and adding this topic to that work would require a significant increase in time and resources.

### **Other amendments previously docketed**

In addition to the amendments proposed by members of the public in 2014, proposals from previous years will be returning to the Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan updating process.

Primary among these is Seattle 2035, the major update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Council provided its priorities for this update in [Resolution 31370](#) and updated the schedule for this update in [Resolution 31451](#). The proposed resolution recognizes this timeline and aligns the annual amendments process for 2014 with the Seattle 2035 process. Further information about Seattle 2035 can be found at: [2035.seattle.gov](http://2035.seattle.gov).

There were three other items that were docketed last year in [Resolution 31458](#) that Council deferred to 2015: amendments to the University Community neighborhood plan, amendments related to the creation of a Stadium District and amendments limiting changes to manufacturing/industrial areas. The Council held these items for future consideration pending additional outreach and analysis. If this work is complete by the time the Executive sends proposed legislation to the Council, the Executive may bring forward amendments related to those topics in 2015.

**Next Steps**

PLUS will discuss and likely vote on a docket resolution on August 13. After Full Council adoption of the resolution, the process for reviewing the amendments on the docket for 2015 is expected to be as follows:

- DPD reviews the proposed amendments, conducts public review as appropriate, and presents its analyses and the Mayor's recommendations to the City Council;
- The Council considers DPD's recommendations, conducts public hearing(s), discusses the merits of the proposed amendments, and votes on a recommendation to Full Council; and
- Full Council votes on a bill amending the Comprehensive Plan in 2015.

**Attachments**

Attachment A: Planning Commission's Comments and Recommendations for Docket Resolution

Attachment B: Comprehensive Plan Docketing Resolution: DPD Recommendation

*Summary of recommendations on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments*

App. #	Applicant	Description of Proposed Amendment	Executive	Planning Commission	Central Staff
1	David Neiman, for the West Seattle Church of the Nazarene	Mr. Neiman proposes to change the FLUM to change the designation of an area west of 42nd Avenue Southwest and south of Southwest Juneau Street from single family to multi-family within the Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>
2	Cindi Barker	Ms. Barker proposes to amend the Urban Village element to add policy language regarding the monitoring and reporting of growth and requiring action when an area exceeds its growth targets.	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>	<b>Direct DPD to consider as part of Seattle 2035</b>
3	Roosevelt Neighbors' Alliance/ Priory of the Blessed Sacrament	The Roosevelt Neighbors' Alliance and the Priory of the Blessed Sacrament propose to change the FLUM and the University Community Urban Center Plan to modify the northwest boundary of the University Community Urban Center.	<b>Do not include (Consider as part of U District Urban Design Framework)</b>	<b>Include (Consider alongside U District Urban Design Framework )</b>	<b>Direct DPD to consider as part of University District Urban Design Framework</b>
4	Chris Leman	Mr. Leman proposes to amend the Transportation element to add new policies limiting skybridges.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>
5	Sue Sherbrooke, for the YWCA Seattle   King County   Snohomish	Ms. Sherbrooke proposes to change the FLUM to add an area north of East Cherry Street and west of 29 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to the 23 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Union-Jackson Residential Urban Village and to change the designation of that property from single family to multi-family.	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>

App. #	Applicant	Description of Proposed Amendment	Executive	Planning Commission	Central Staff
6	Joseph Brogan, for King County Department of Executive Services (DES)	Mr. Brogan proposes to amend a land use policy to allow greater flexibility in the height of small institutions and public facilities.	<b>Include</b>	<b>Include</b>	<b>Direct DPD to consider as part of Seattle 2035</b>
7	Greg Hill	Mr. Hill proposes to amend the Land Use Element to limit live-work units along arterials.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>
8	Jessica Clausen, for Matthew Laase	Ms. Clausen proposes to amend the FLUM to remove an area north of Northwest 51 <sup>st</sup> Street, west of 11 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Northwest, south of Northwest 54 <sup>th</sup> Street, and east of 15 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Northwest from the Ballard-Interbay-Northend Manufacturing/Industrial Center and to change the designation of that area from industrial to commercial/mixed-use.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>
9	Jessica Clausen, for AnMarCo	Ms. Clausen proposes to remove an area waterward of Harbor Avenue Southwest and south of SW Bronson Way known as Pier One from the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center and to change the designation of that area from industrial to commercial/mixed-use.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>
10	Chris Leman	Mr. Leman proposes to add a new “Open and Participatory Government” element to the Comprehensive Plan.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>
11	Chris Leman	Mr. Leman proposes to amend the housing element to limit congregate housing.	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>	<b>Do not include</b>